



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2021015**

**DATE: 23 March 2021**

**RE: Amherst council approves priorities**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – Council approved a Top 10 list of priorities during its March 22, 2021, meeting that included priority projects and operational areas.

The priority projects include the development and construction of a new community centre to replace the 60-year-old Amherst Stadium, a complete review of the town's municipal planning strategy, a complete review of council committees, council's participation on external boards and committees and all town policies and bylaws, and the potential expansion of the Amherst and Area Industrial Park.

The operational priority areas include continuing to foster conditions to facilitate business development, continue the work to ensure community vibrancy, attracting people to live in Amherst by ensuring it is an inclusive, welcoming community in which to live, work and play, promoting the history and culture of Amherst through continued festivals and events, addressing drugs and addiction and addressing the need for a sufficient supply of suitable and affordable housing in Amherst.

### **Amherst gives first reading to development agreements**

Two proposed development agreements were given their first reading when Amherst town council held a meeting on Monday, March 22, 2021.

The first was for a property at 11 Victor Ave., where the owner wants approval to install a garden suite within an existing building on the property. The second was for a property on 15 Clinton St., where the owner wants to convert an existing three-unit dwelling into a four-unit dwelling.





Both were the subject of public participation sessions in February, though no member of the public attended either session. Subsequently, the town's planning advisory committee recommended both development agreements be approved by council.

Prior to the development agreements going into effect, a public hearing and second reading have to take place. The public hearing for both will take place on April, 14, 2021, with the second reading taking place later that month.

### **NSPI Easement Agreement**

An easement agreement between the Town of Amherst and Nova Scotia Power Inc. was approved by the council.

The easement, which is about six metres wide and 90 metres long, will accommodate the connection of the power company's soon-to-be-built solar garden on Tupper Boulevard with the electrical grid.

It will give the power company access to the power lines that traverse the town-owned property at the back of Lot 11 in the industrial park and enables it to clear any vegetation or other obstructions from the easement on an ongoing basis.

### **Walking Track**

Council approved the extension of the term customer service positions at the Amherst Stadium until May 31, 2021.

Without the approved extension, the term for the representatives would have expired on March 31, 2021.

Hiring the representatives enabled the town to extend the walking track hours at the stadium and reinstate public skating sessions, while meeting provincially mandated COVID-19 protocols.

Since their appointment, the number of walkers using the track has increased weekly as it now operates at near pre-pandemic hours.





While the term of employment for the representatives has been extended to the end of May, the current walking track and public skating schedules may be impacted as the warmer weather arrives in order to ensure acceptable ice conditions are maintained. Any changes to the schedules will be posted to the town's website and social media pages.

The time the ice is in the stadium is being extended into the warmer weather because the Maritime Hockey League's regular season and playoffs are going much later into the year than usual.

Funding to cover the cost of maintaining the positions – about \$11,000 – until May 31, 2021, will come from the town's operating reserves.

### **Property Purchase**

The purchase of a 30-hectare property that is part of the North Tyndal Wellfield recharge area was approved by the council.

The \$35,000 price tag is being covered by the federal government's Challenge Fund, a multimillion-dollar fund established in 2019 to help protect at risk species across Canada by protecting their habitat.

Amherst was selected to participate in the fund due to its previous efforts to protect land resources around the wellfield, the area's unique biodiversity and the importance of the area as a land bridge for species travelling between Nova Scotia and the rest of the continent.

The town worked with the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment in securing the purchase of the property, which is a mixture of woodland and wetland.

The acquisition and continued protection of this land will benefit future generations by helping protect Amherst's water supply, while assisting migratory animals pass through the Isthmus of Chignecto.





## **Volunteer of the Year**

Council named Lisa Gower as the Town of Amherst's volunteer of the year. She will represent the town during the provincial volunteer awards ceremony that takes place on April 24, 2021.

In addition, council named Rick MacKenney and Rachna Minocha as the town's family volunteer of the year and its nomination for Nova Scotia's family volunteer of the year.

These volunteers were selected from applications the town received earlier this year. There were no applications for youth volunteer of the year.

National Volunteer Week runs from April 18 to April 24, 2021. Amherst will formally recognize these volunteers and all those nominated during that week.

## **Police Commission appointments**

Sandy Fairbanks was reappointed by council to a two-year term as a citizen appointee on the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners.

In addition, they reappointed Steven Wells and Roy Pettigrew to one-year terms as citizen appointees on the board.

Council also confirmed the appointment of Deputy-Mayor Hal Davidson to a three-year term on the board and Coun. George Baker to a two-year term.

## **Planning Advisory Committee appointment**

Council approved the appointment of Larry Pardy to a one-year term as a citizen appointee on the town's planning advisory committee.

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